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Statement by Mayor Smith about recent comments regarding proposed legislation to enhance Cactus League

“I’d like to emphasize to everyone that what we are proposing is not just a Mesa project: it is a Cactus League project. The Chicago Cubs are far and away the leader in Spring Training attendance. They bring in thousands more tourists than any other team in the Cactus League, which creates an economic impact for all of Arizona in excess of \$100 million each year. And, the Cubs spread these benefits around. Scottsdale and Phoenix/Tempe get more Cubs tourists in their hotels than Mesa! This is about jobs and tourism dollars that positively benefit this state every year.

From day one, I have advocated a solution that not only keeps the Cubs from moving to Florida, but provides a framework that will benefit all Cactus League teams. Unfortunately, the other Cactus League teams jumped to a conclusion and declared their opposition to a bill they have neither seen nor even discussed with either House Majority Leader McComish or me. We hope the teams will take the time to meet with us this week to discuss the various proposals on the table, including a possible surcharge. This is not just a Mesa or Cubs problem. All teams and cities will reach a point in the future when they too will be faced with the challenge of upgrading facilities that have aged or are obsolete. Hopefully, the teams will keep an open mind and discuss honestly how this problem can be resolved so the Cactus League can remain strong and successful. To do otherwise is shortsighted, selfish and foolish. I welcome the opportunity to explain the bill and other proposals to the leaders of any other Cactus League team.”